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ABSTRACT

In 1988, Illinois entered into a 5-year commitment, called the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools (IAES), to implement the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) philosophy in several secondary schools. This paper presents findings of a study that examined how IAES schools defined the program's nine Common Principles and the implementation strategies they devised. Data were collected through a survey mailed to the 20 participating schools (5 rural, 4 suburban, and 11 urban). Seventeen schools returned the questionnaire. Findings indicate that commonalities existed among the schools' definitions of the Common Principles and also among their strategies for implementing each principle. The definitions and strategies appeared to be consistent with those offered by the CES. However, the schools' responses lacked depth, which may have been due to the questionnaire's format. Also, the schools seemed to have a working knowledge of each of the Common Principles, but did not demonstrate a recognition of the interrelationships among the principles. They tended to treat the principles separately, rather than as an integrated whole. An implication is that school-restructuring efforts need the involvement of the entire school. The appendix contains the thematic classification system. (Contains seven references.) (LMI)

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ED 385 953

School-Generated Definitions of the Nine Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools: The Illinois Experience

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by

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Paper presented at the Annual American Educational Research Association Meeting in San Francisco, CA (April, 1995). The interpretations and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the Illinois State Board of Education. Reader comments may be sent to: Dr. F.E. Dawson, Policy, Planning and Research (S-284), Illinois State Board of Education, 100 N. First St., Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

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INTRODUCTION

Current interest in school change results from society's heightened awareness of the necessity of quality educational systems. Many initiatives have been proposed as having the *potential* of "restructuring" schools if properly implemented and maintained, thus improving the quality of the educational services provided. One school restructuring initiative that has received much press of late is the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). Based on the work of Sizer (1984), the nine principles (called the Common Principles) of the CES "... represent the embodiment of the philosophy of the Coalition and serve as the framework for individual school restructuring efforts" (Prestine, 1993, p. 32).

For a philosophy, or framework, to have meaning, key terms must be defined. The CES (no date) has defined each of the Common Principles[1] (i.e., its key terms) as:

1 - The school should focus on helping adolescents **learn to use their minds well**. Schools should not attempt to be "comprehensive" if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.

2 - The school's goals should be simple: that each student **master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge**. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than necessarily by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "Less Is More" should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort merely to cover content.

3 - The school's **goals should apply to all students**, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.

4 - **Teaching and learning should be personalized** to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.

5 - **The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker**, rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.

6 - Students entering secondary school studies are those who can show competence in language and elementary mathematics. Students of traditional high school age but not yet at appropriate levels of competence to enter secondary school studies will be provided intensive remedial work to assist them quickly to meet these standards. **The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery** for graduation--an "Exhibition." This Exhibition by the student of his or her grasp of the central skills and knowledge of the school's program may be jointly administered by the faculty and by higher authorities. As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of "credits earned" by

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[1]For the purposes of this study, the definitions provided above are considered the theoretical definitions of the nine Common Principles of the CES. Although less precise, the bold-faced portions of these definitions will be used as descriptors.

"time spent" in class. The emphasis is on the students' demonstration that they can do important things.

7 - **The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation** ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of **trust** (until abused) and of **decency** (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.

8 - **The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first** (teachers and scholars in general education) **and specialists second** (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor manager) and a sense of commitment to the entire school.

9 - Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to **total student loads per teacher of 80 or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent.** To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional comprehensive secondary schools.

In 1988, a program (called *Re: Learning*) was launched to implement the Common Principles in six states. As one of these states, Illinois entered into a five-year commitment to implement the philosophy of the CES in a number of secondary schools. Each school participating in the Illinois *RE: Learning* initiative [known as the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools (IAES)] was to use the philosophy of the CES to restructure its delivery of educational services in accordance with each school's unique circumstances. Yet, implementation of an initiative is dependent, in part, upon a working knowledge of the philosophical principles underlying the initiative and translating this knowledge into specific applications. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine how IAES schools have defined the Common Principles, in aggregate and after five years of experience, and what strategies have been devised, in aggregate and after five years of experience, to implement the school-generated definitions. Specifically, this study was guided by two research questions:

- What commonalities exist in the definitions of the Common Principles developed by schools participating in the IAES and are these definitions consistent with the "theoretical" definitions of the CES?

- What commonalities exist in the strategies devised to implement the school-based definitions and are these implementation strategies consistent with the definitions developed by schools participating in the IAES?

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire requesting information concerning the school, fiscal issues, program planning, collaborative initiatives within the school, the IAES experience, and the Common Principles was mailed to the 20 schools participating in the IAES. Only two types of items contained in the Common Principles section of the questionnaire were analyzed for this study. These items asked how each school had uniquely defined a specific principle and what strategies had been undertaken to implement the specified principle. The information sought was qualitative in nature, consisting of open-ended questions.

Verbatim responses were compiled for each item. Based on the methods described by Miles & Huberman (1994), these responses were then categorized around the themes apparent in the aggregate. The initial thematic classification was then read by three other individuals. If the placement of a response was questioned by any of the reviewers, the response in question was discussed and its placement into a category of responses was achieved through consensus. The resulting thematic classification appears in Appendix A.

RESULTS

The Schools and the Response Rate

The schools participating in the IAES are located in rural (N=5), suburban (N=4), and urban (N=11) areas throughout Illinois. All urban schools are located in Chicago (55.0% of all IAES schools). Seventeen schools returned the questionnaire (85.0% response rate). The questionnaire was completed by the IAES school coordinator in over 70 percent (i.e., 70.6%) of the responses. School principals completed the questionnaire in 23.4 percent of the responses received. Over 70 percent (i.e., 70.6%) of the schools responding reported involving the entire student population in the IAES initiative.

Limitations

Before presenting the findings, three limitations to this study should be noted. First, all data are self-reported. Without independent validation, the validity of the findings may be questionable. Second, the instructions may have been interpreted as directing the respondents to be *very* brief in their responses. Any clarification of the instructions may have reinforced the interpretation suggesting brevity in responding to an item. These brief responses lacked contextual clues which may have caused an incorrect classification of certain responses, especially those categorized as "other." Third, the structure of the questionnaire may have biased the responses. That is, the questionnaire was structured in a way that may have precluded the respondents from indicating the inter-connected nature of the Common Principles and the implementation strategies developed to integrate these Principles into their instructional program.

Findings

Schools participating in the IAES seem to define the principle of **students learning to use their minds well** in terms of thinking skills. For example, one school defined this principle as "It is the job of the school to provide students with a body of information so that they will be able to think analytically, skeptically, creatively, and critically to generate effective and appropriate responses." Another stated, "An intellectual focus is one in which students are constantly engaged in exercising their minds. Great emphasis is placed on the acquisition and application of higher-order thinking skills." To achieve these thinking skills in the classroom, responding schools indicated that they are examining curricular and instructional issues as a strategy to implement this principle.

The principle of student **mastery of a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge** is defined by IAES participants in terms of essential knowledge. As one school indicated, "Less is more means that students cannot be expected to learn everything related to a specific subject; consequently, essential knowledge must be separated from non-essential knowledge, and courses must be structured accordingly." Like the principle of **students learning to use their minds well**, schools reported that they are examining curricular and instructional issues as a strategy to implement this principle.

Responding schools define **goals applying to all students** as universal goals. These schools tend to have unique plans or use unique strategies in implementing this principle. One school noted, "All students are included in the Essential School Project." Another indicated, "Tracking has been completely eliminated. All classes are taught at the honors level, and students are expected to achieve at this level." The one shared strategy that began to emerge was the inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms.

The principle of **personalized teaching and learning** is defined most often as individualized instruction by participating IAES schools. For example, one school wrote, "Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent, considering the student's individual and group-related needs." Another aspect of personalized instruction also surfaced, that of the teacher-student relationship. One school described this aspect of instructional personalization as, "Teachers should be able to have more contact with fewer students. In doing so, students and teachers will strive to develop a personal relationship and spirit of cooperation." The most frequently mentioned implementation strategy was that of structural change. That is, as one school put it, "Restructure the configuration [of the school] using [the concept of] small schools."

Schools participating in the IAES define the **governing metaphor of student-as-worker** synonymously with student-as-active learner. One school's response typifies the school-generated definitions, "Teachers are no longer only instructors. Student-as-worker means that students are active rather than passive learners. Classroom activities are organized around essential questions that the students explore." The predominate strategy indicated by responding schools was a shift toward the use of "hands-on" activities.

The common principle of **awarding a diploma upon successful final demonstration of mastery** is defined by schools participating in the IAES as authentic/alternative assessment. Use of authentic/alternative assessment practices (e.g., the use of portfolios and classroom exhibitions) is the most commonly cited strategy for implementing this principle. For example, one school noted, "Many teachers require students to complete final exhibition of mastery projects as part of or in place of semester or final exams."

A building tone that is conducive to learning is how IAES schools define the principle of the **school tone stressing values of unanxious expectations and trust**. For example, one school indicated, "The climate of the school should be one in which students feel welcome and secure while understanding the school's expectations and their [the students'] responsibility." Schools use strategies that are unique to their individual circumstances. That is, no one central theme best describes a school's approach to achieving a building tone that promotes unanxious expectations and trust.

Schools participating in the IAES tend to define the common principle of **teacher as generalist first and specialist second** with multi- and cross-discipline teaching. As one school contends, "All teachers in the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools are not limited to their subject area." Another suggests, "Teachers are not only specialists in their subject matter, but they [the teachers] must first and foremost be scholars of general education." Changing instructional practices was the strategy most frequently mentioned to promote this scholarship in general education. For example, some schools indicated the development and use of interdisciplinary units as one way to implement this principle.

The principle of a recommended **student-to-teacher ratio of 80:1** has been the most difficult for schools participating in the IAES to implement. Those schools that have been successful at achieving the 80:1 ratio used strategies that are unique to their school setting. For example, one school mentioned, "By creating teams we have been successful in reducing the student-teacher ratio from about 150 to 1 to about 115 to 1. One team has been able to create a ratio of 58 to 1." Another school offered, "... innovative linking of courses and scheduling to have teachers' [student] load reduced."

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that commonalities do exist in how IAES schools have defined the Common Principles and these definitions seem to be consistent with the "theoretical" definitions offered by the CES. Commonalities also exist in the implementation strategies developed by IAES participants and these implementation strategies also seem to be derived from the definitions formulated by IAES schools. Although common strategies seem to have been developed to implement a specific Common Principle across IAES schools, this result is not clear for all principles. For example, no single category, or group of categories, can best describe the strategies participating schools have used to implement the Common Principles of: **goals applying to all students, a building tone stressing the values of unanxious expectations and trust, and a student-to-teacher ratio of 80:1**.

Although the schools participating in the IAES have defined the Common Principles in a manner similar to the theoretical definition, depth in the responses is lacking in both the definitions put forth and the strategies for implementing each principle. This lack of depth did not allow a clear understanding of terminology used by the questionnaire respondents. For example, if the term interdisciplinary teaching is given as a response to an implementation strategy item, it is difficult to ascertain what is actually meant by the respondent in using this term. The following scenario highlights this confusion. Students in history are asked to compose an essay on a topic studied in class. This is an activity commonly used by the history teacher. Would this activity constitute interdisciplinary teaching or is this a superficial inclusion of another subject area and called interdisciplinary teaching? The fault for this lack of depth may lie with the questionnaire. As mentioned, verbal or written directions may have been interpreted as requesting brief responses or there may have been insufficient room to provide a well-developed response.

It seems that IAES schools have a working knowledge of each of the Common Principles, but may not have recognized the inter-relationships among the Common Principles. This nonrecognition is reflected in the self-contained nature of the definitions developed and the resulting implementation strategies. Consistent with the findings presented here, McGreal and Dodds (1994) have reported that IAES schools treat the Common Principles as distinct elements and not as an integrated whole (i.e., a framework) as espoused by Prestine (1993). Specifically, McGreal and Dodds state:

> ... we found that for many of our schools the entire concept of the Essential School was reduced to the nine principles. In turn, those nine principles were recast as nine "steps" to follow in order to become an Essential School. Clear separation of the principles appeared to be the common practice in most of the Alliance schools (p. 55).

This is especially troublesome given that IAES participants have had five years of experience working with these principles. The Common Principles of the CES must be viewed as components of a general philosophical framework, not discrete executable steps leading to an endpoint called a restructured school. This view is consistent with the work of Murphy (1991) who reminds us that a school undergoes restructuring, but never becomes restructured.

For a school to be involved in a restructuring effort, the whole school must be involved, not one grade or one type of student, but all grades and all students. Currently, total school involvement does not characterize *all* schools participating in the IAES and may indicate what Conley (1993) refers to as a school "tinkering around the edge" of restructuring for those schools reporting less than full student body involvement. This aspect of current IAES restructuring begs the question, if successes are attained with only a subsection of a school, can the school validly claim that they are restructuring their school?

In closing, each school must find ways to change the delivery of educational services that work in its unique situation. What works in one school may not work in another and, what works during one school year, may not work the next. Any school restructuring effort warrants constant evaluation, by those involved, to maintain the dynamic nature of school change.

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APPENDIX A

The 1993-94 Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools (IAES) Questionnaire:

Common Principle Data Classification

Intellectual Focus

Definition:

Thinking skills

- Higher level thinking skills.
- All courses for students should be designed to encourage the maximum use of higher order thinking skills.
- It is the job of the school to provide students with a body of information so that they will be able to think analytically, skeptically, creatively, and critically to generate effective and appropriate responses.
- An intellectual focus is one in which student are constantly engaged in exercising their minds. Great emphasis is placed on the acquisition and application of higher order thinking skills.
- Provide critical thinking activities through open ended problem solving and collaboration.
- The ideal XXXXX graduate communicates effectively, demonstrates quantitative and analytical thinking skills, and works independently and collaboratively.
- The primary task of the school must be to engage students in thinking and learning.
- To provide students with the intellectual skills needed to engage in effective writing, computing, research, decision making, thinking and communication, and to provide students with the skills and competencies necessary for independent learning.
- A primary school goal should be teaching students the thinking skills necessary to enable them to apply knowledge across the curriculum.
- Mathematics as a problem-solving, communication and reasoning tool; use of technology

Other

- Using your mind well.
- To provide activities that enable student to "stretch" the mind in a disciplined and creative mode.
- Students master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge
- Reading and writing across the curriculum
- Produce students who can generate questions, search for answers, synthesize and defend the results of their inquiry.
- The student should have the entire educational experience centered on the idea of being able to learn how to learn. This is the intellectual focus of the high school.
- Help all students use their minds well.
- Students must be able to apply what they learn by exhibiting what they have academically-retained on demand. The student must demonstrate his/her mastery of the institution's requirements that will lead to degrees of success in a competitive world.

Strategies/Plans:

Curriculum and Instruction

- XXXXX will reassess the current status of curricula previously developed for the school and/or district.
- XXXXX will continue to help the district revise existing curricula to more closely reflect our vision of Intellectual Focus, Simple Goals, and Universal Goals.
- XXXXX will continue to implement the revised curricula as they are developed.
- Programs have been created in Inter-Tech 2000, to fill the intellectual needs of our students. These programs are designed in varying degrees of content to compliment individuality of our students.
- Changes in curriculum have been geared toward the above. Students engaged in Socratic discussions, teach lessons, and working collaboratively to solve problems.

- Writing across the curriculum.
- Selection of language arts texts that emphasize the writing process.
- Selection of mathematics programs that accelerate all students and stress application.
- Development of essential questions in social studies.
- Hands-on activities.
- XXXXX will continue to develop techniques for teaching which will help students develop habits of thinking well, being self-directed learners, and being responsible.
- During school year 1993-94, XXXXX teachers will continue to study various methods of providing authentic learning activities.
- Force students to apply knowledge not just recall.
- Cooperative Learning Teaching Strategies.
- Hands-on learning experiences.
- Hands-on activities in science.
- Problem solving.
- Open ended questions and brain storming -- Critical Thinking Skills
- Opportunities are provided for students to learn to question, evaluate, draw conclusions and make recommendations.
- Each department has prepared an improvement plan and meets regularly to discuss improvement plans and curriculum offerings. Each department is also responsible for planning and implementing two staff development days to address curriculum issues and implementation. Task forces have been developed to prepare implementation plans for department portfolios, student portfolios, exhibitions, multicultural/ethnic activities, and interdisciplinary units.
- The essential school program at XXXXX High School has established high expectations for student achievement. Through an integrated curriculum, students engage in a variety of learning activities where they develop reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking skills: mock trials, research papers, cooperative learning activities, and performances. The use of alternative performance-based forms of assessment, instead of a reliance on paper/pencil tests, leads to the actualization of this principle at XXXXX High School.
- Teachers have implemented teaching techniques utilizing discussion groups, cooperative learning, research projects, and applied skills projects.
- XXXXX will increase by 10% the number of students at or above the national norm in Reading, Writing and Mathematics on the TAP Test. Students will read for information and exhibit their increased reading ability. Ten minutes will be set aside for reading per day per class. All classes will focus on improvement of vocabulary. Freshman will use PALS and TLC's lab.
- All teachers and students will participate in writing across the curriculum. All freshmen and sophomore teachers and students will keep a journal/log.
- Summer school will be provided for students not reaching mastery. Students will write one paper in each class each semester. We will hire outside professionals to assist with the reading project.
- The development of core curriculum
- Socratic Seminars
- Every class has a main theme that is the center of the unit under study.
- Work to integrate more interdisciplinary units where students work in cooperative pairs and on one outcome.

Assessment Practices

- Portfolios.
- Exhibitions.
- Use authentic assessment.
- Share ideas and assessments among the faculty.

Other

- Outreach--Service Learning Activities.
- Mastery in some classes.
- Premier Agenda.

Curriculum Principle--Less is More

Definition:

Essential Knowledge

- Each student should strive to master fundamental skills in specified areas of knowledge.
- Redesigning class goals to a limited number of essential skills that students will be expected to master.
- Each student is expected to master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge, such as: reading, listening, writing, speaking, computations, problem-solving, independent research, and socialization. Curricular decisions should be guided by mastery and achievement rather than just covering content.
- To focus curriculum and instruction around a specific set of skills, goals, and objectives that will be addressed and reinforced in each subject.
- Curriculum should be mastered in small increments rather than merely covered. Students should master the essential skills.
- Less is more means that students cannot be expected to learn everything related to a specific subject; consequently, essential knowledge must be separated from non-essential knowledge, and courses must be structured accordingly.
- Extract from the curriculum what is not absolutely necessary and teach those things essential for student learning.

"In-depth learning"

- The course content will be diminished somewhat, but the students will be expected to learn more by working more in depth on prescribed units.
- Instruction should be more concerned with providing deeper understanding and knowledge than covering the textbook.
- In-depth exploration of concepts rather than mere coverage of material.

Other

- The curriculum should emphasize quality rather than quantity.
- Rather than "covering the curriculum," students will master what they study and will have a better understanding.
- Work toward student mastery and achievement rather than content.

Strategies/Plans:

Curriculum and Instruction

- Working toward mastery.
- XXXXX will reassess the current status of curricula previously developed for the school and/or district.

- XXXXX will continue to help the district revise existing curricula to more closely reflect our vision of Intellectual Focus, Simple Goals, and Universal Goals.
- XXXXX will continue to implement the revised curricula as they are developed.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX teachers will participate in revising district curricula in the following subjects: Language Arts, Reading and Literature.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX will implement the following previously revised curricula: Social Studies and Science.
- The integration of a common theme of knowledge into the instruction of our students. They must see the relationship of their schooling to the real world.
- In each department, essential skills will be decided upon for each course along with assessment for these skills. Essential skills will correlate with school goals.
- Cross-curricular projects.
- Teacher training in cooperative learning and teacher inter-disciplinary planning have provided lessons in which students study more in-depth rather than try to "finish the book." Math classes are starting to be taught with projects instead of the traditional textbook approach.
- Review of curricula areas.
- Development of essential questions in social studies.
- Integration of curriculum so that students see connections.
- Quarterly lesson plans in the form of webs so that teachers can plan connections more effectively.
- A key component of the essential school program at XXXXX High School is bringing teachers together from instructional areas to collaboratively plan instructional activities. Focusing on essential questions, program teachers, as well as those planning curriculum, support the instructional efforts of one another through the development of a multidisciplinary, integrated curriculum that supports the idea "less is more." Teachers also have developed programs and instructional approaches that require students to transfer learning and that establish high expectations for achievement by both students and teachers.
- Individual Education Programs are designed for special education students who are included in regular classrooms. An alternative school program has been implemented for at-risk students, and an individual education program is developed for each student.
- To implement the principle of less is more through the development of a curriculum grounded by essential questions, and reflecting on commitment to integrated disciplines.
- Integrated curriculums at all four grade levels, where content is set aside to cover more in-depth units - multicultural unit, weather unit, medieval unit, H.O.M.E. units. Continue to develop integrated curriculums that include academics and special areas.
- Each department and task force continually review curriculum offerings and implementation methods. Task forces are currently developing plans that would correlate the English and Social Studies curriculums beginning with the next school year.

Assessment Practices

- Portfolios.
- Exhibition in classes.
- Assessments and activities evaluate students mastery of essential skills.

Other

- The writing of learner outcomes has forced teachers to select what is important.
- Abandon, alter, and add.
- XXXXX is no longer a "Shopping Mall" high school. All of the students take core courses. Also, departments have been merged so that we only have four as opposed to ten.
- Release time given for teachers at each grade level and across grade levels to meet in their subject area to develop plans for smoother transition of student learning from one grade level to the next.

- American Studies
- Mall Program

Universal Goals

Definition:

Goals for all students

- The school's goals should apply to all, but the means by which these goals are achieved may vary.
- The goals are the same for all students in a heterogeneous setting, recognizing diversity in ability levels and learning styles.
- The school's goals should apply to all students, while the methods of reaching these goals will vary as the students vary.
- All students will aim toward the same goal: All students should learn to use their minds well and develop a desire to become productive adults through education.
- Universal goals are those that apply to all students.
- The school should have a few basic goals which all students are expected to attain.
- School goals should apply to all students, although different means may be employed with different students to accomplish these goals.
- Every student should have the opportunity to develop to the fullness of his/her ability.
- All students in XXXXX Middle School will work to meet the same goals in order to establish and maintain a positive school tone

Other

- Vision Statement: A place where students and faculty experience the joy of learning by promoting high expectations and nurturing human worth through a relevant, innovative curriculum and an actively involved community.
- Our school believes all students can learn and will be given the opportunity.
- The ideal XXXXX graduate communicates effectively, demonstrates quantitative and analytical thinking skills, and works independently and collaboratively.
- All students can learn. Learning activities and goals should be tailored to meet individual student needs.
- Reading, writing and mathematics will be taught across the curriculum. Additionally, mathematics will be used as a problem-solving, communication and reasoning tool. Students will use computers, telecommunications and other technology.
- To prepare our students to be citizens in a democracy, learners for life, and economically productive members of the society.
- H.O.M.E. all school project. Major focus for 1993-1994 all students are committed to learning the philosophy of the project this year. Humanity, opportunity, manners and environment are the four quarter focuses.

Strategies/Plans:

Inclusion

- Inclusion of all special education in all classes with a resource person assigned to address the needs of all students.
- Inclusion of special education.
- Cooperative learning workshops have been held to train teachers and staff in these strategies. Also, training for and plans to implement Regular Education Initiative will continue.

- The special education inclusion program and alternative school program both adjust and tailor learning activities to meet individual needs.
- All students are included in the Essential School Project.

Other

- AJ Outreach.
- Healthy Lifestyles Class.
- Portfolios.
- The scheduling structures of XXXXX will also remain relatively constant. However, as part of the continuing trend, each teaching-learning team will expand its use of the freedom to define time, student groupings, and locations to promote maximum teaching and learning.
- The 1994-95 school year will include four mini-schools or strands: 1) math/science; 2) communications (desk top lab/video); 3) hospitality (tech/prep); 4) production tech.
- The XXXXX graduate is the driving force.
- More programs such as Tech-Prep Food Service to provide for cognitively delayed students. More hands-on and vocational programs to develop students thinking skills and to provide students with salable skills. Examples of this are: XCAT, Tech-Prep Business, Med-Tech, Tech-Prep Metals.
- Tracking has been completely eliminated. All classes are taught at the honors level, and students are expected to achieve at this level.
- We have implemented the PACE (Pupils Achieving Competence and Excellence) Program to meet the needs of underachieving students. This program teams a regular and special education teacher to serve mainstreamed special education students. A division guidance program has been implemented.
- The steering committee considered this principle when it wrote the school goals and believes the universal goals are part of these statements.
- The evolving essential school program at XXXXX High School has developed beyond the initial five teacher, integrated freshman pilot program to a broader base of intellectual emphasis that permeates much of the District's staff and curricular foundations. The District motto: "Knowledge is our guide. Success is our goal;" the mission statement "to assist every student to develop life-long learning skills, self-esteem, and a set of values;" and a Board goal to "prepare students to live successfully in the 21st century;" indicate that universal goals have been established for the District. An innovative staff development program where teachers work on departmental and interdepartmental collaborative teams to address topics relating to curriculum, the use of technology, student achievement, and motivation further attest to the realization of this principle.
- Familiarize parents, students, teachers, and community members with common learning experiences and techniques. Form and interdepartmental committee on common learning experiences. Work with the Department of Management Information Services, XXXXX, to institute variable credits to help ensure mastery of common learning experience.
- Move to heterogeneous classes where the academic differences in students are addressed individually. Establishment of a core curriculum with all students having a common learning experience.

Personalization

Definition:

Individualized instruction/learning

- More individual learning to meet the needs of all students.
- Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent, considering the student's individual and group-related needs. Ideally, a teacher should have the responsibility of no

more than eighty students. The basic course of study, materials, and time will be determined by principal and teaching staff.

- Teaching and learning should be personalized or individualized. "We are all life-long learners" is the order of thinking at XXXXX.
- Instruction and assessment will be done on an individual basis when possible and necessary.
- Convert the 80 minute program to a 100 minute program, and continue the use of learning styles.

Teacher-student relationship

- Teachers should be able to have more contact time by having fewer students. In doing so, students and teachers will strive to develop a personal relationship and spirit of cooperation.
- Personalization means that each student is viewed as a worthwhile individual who has something to contribute to the learning experience. Teachers get to know each student personally, i.e., strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- The school should provide an environment which allows teachers the opportunity to get to know their students well to meet the needs of individuals.

Other

- Breaking up the Freshman class into areas of study such as: Sci/Math, Voc. Tech., Tech/Prep, etc. with their own set of instructors and division teachers.
- Set expectations for all students that will generate motivation and performance but acknowledge difference in student learning styles in the instructional program.
- Given the individual academic, attendance and deportment levels of achievement students bring at matriculation, we will provide each student with the maximum opportunity to gain basic life skills, academic success, and emotional and social maturity.
- Develop a professional library for the staff.
- Staff Development Design Team develop staff development activities.
- All students will be life-long learners
- Decisions about instruction, the use of class time, and the choice of teaching methods are made by teachers working in cooperation with each other and building level administrators.
- Teachers and administrators should make curriculum decisions. Class size should be small to allow greater personalization of instruction.
- A core curriculum complimented by elective classes which permit students to follow their interests and personalize their education.

<u>Strategies/Plans:</u>

Educational/Structural Change

- Students stay together in their group all day to create a sense of family, promoting care for one another. Instructors were given common prep time to plan and establish goals for the groups area of study.
- Restructure configuration using small schools.
- Use of common planning during the day and the early-outs on Wednesday.
- We have made efforts to divide our student body into strands Med-Tech, Tech-Prep Foods, College Prep, Tech-Prep Metals, and Vocational Tech Business. Structured Studies has been instituted for remedial work. Lessons are made more personalized through our strands and interdisciplinary lessons.
- Teaming at all grade levels.

- Freedom and time to make choices are inherent in the philosophical and the daily teaching practices of those presently involved in essential school activities as well as for those who will become involved in the future. Examples of these include:

    1) The freshman team is given a five period block of time and can schedule those periods as they wish. Often, a class may run two or three periods with others not meeting that day. The traditional bell schedule may or may not be used. These teachers are also provided a common planning period, and their supervisory period usually is with these same students, allowing for increased teacher-student contact time.

    2) The junior American literature/American history integrated program is planning a program that will take advantage of similar flexibility.

    3) There is also a single teacher program which combines advanced English and a drama elective. It has a double class period in which to integrate these two subjects.

    4) As future teams are developed, we anticipate the same time and methodology latitudes will be utilized.

    5) Teachers have the opportunity to work on self-directed interdepartmental and departmental staff development network teams to explore and develop alternative instructional programs.

Other

- XXXXX will reassess the current status of curricula previously developed for the school and/or district.
- Homeroom.
- Hiring of additional staff.
- The first week of the school year is devoted to activities geared toward learning the students. These activities are repeated at various intervals.
- Use of portfolios and exhibitions of mastery will be implemented.
- An advisor/advisee program is in place.
- We have implemented the PACE (Pupils Achieving Competence and Excellence) Program to meet the needs of underachieving students. Students, for the most part, have the same division teacher and counselor for all four years. Extensive extra- and co-curricular offerings provide each student with an opportunity to work in small groups with teacher mentors. The ethnic and multicultural task forces are developing units to meet the needs of our multi-cultural/multiethnic student population.
- CAP (Cougar Advisory Program).
- Since the beginning of its pilot essential school program, the District has had the goal to provide students, teachers, and building administrators with an opportunity to collaboratively make decisions about curricula, the daily schedule, the essential school's structure, and the decision making process. Providing students with choice by developing activities that utilize various instructional modalities and learning options has been a second program goal. Addressing these two goals remains a focus of the essential school program, and efforts continue to provide teachers with the time and resources to develop an effective essential school program.
- Teachers and administrators jointly plan curriculum. Teachers plan assessments. IEPs are planned for special education students and at-risk students in the alternative school program.
- Focus on the multicultural character of the student body through assemblies, displays and festivals highlighting contributions of various ethnic groups. Classroom teachers' use of seminars, which allow students to explore potentially threatening topics within a safe environment.

Student as Worker/Teacher as Facilitator

Definition:

Student responsible for learning

- Student is more responsible for own learning. Teacher is guide and resource person.
- An overall principle of the school should be that the teacher will act as the coach, thus shifting the responsibility of learning to the student.
- Students will take more responsibility for their learning with the teacher providing directions and opportunities.
- The teacher acts as a coach and monitors student learning rather than being a dispenser of knowledge. The student must do the work and learn how to learn.

Student as active participant

- A student must be an active participant in order to learn. He/She must acquire skills in observation, questioning, hypothesizing, researching, supporting a position, and testing the validity of a solution.
- Students become partners in the teaching and learning process.
- Empower students to think, lead, plan and work cooperatively and independently.
- The basic policy of the school will be student as worker. The teacher's role will be that of a coach motivating and guiding students to learn how to learn.
- Teachers are no longer the only instructors. Students learn with help from each other, and teachers become coaches in the learning process as students learn to teach themselves.
- Student as worker means that students are active rather than passive learners. Lecturing is kept at a minimum. Classroom activities are organized around essential questions that the students explore.
- Students should be allowed to pursue answers to essential questions in a non-lecture approach. When appropriate, students are engaged in activities with the teacher acting as a coach.
- The student is an active participant in the educational program.
- Instead of teachers assuming the role of delivers of information, they act as facilitators of learning. Students thus become active partners in the educational process rather than passive recipients of knowledge.
- Students should be actively involved in the learning process. Teachers should guide or "coach" students in the learning process rather than lecture and deliver information.
- To have students demonstrate the ability to generate questions, search for answers and present the results of such an inquiry in a clear and cogent manner.

Other

- Convert the 80 minute program to a 100 minute program, and continue the use of learning styles.
- All students will be life-long learners

Strategies/Plans:

Instructional Practices

- Mock Trials.
- Peer Tutoring.
- XXXXX will continue to develop techniques for teaching which will help students develop the habits of thinking well, being self-directed learners, and being responsible.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX teachers will continue to study various methods of providing authentic learning activities.

- Students are encouraged to become active participants by participating in interdisciplinary, cooperative projects; by being encouraged to ask questions and seek answers to their questions; by improving their communication skills in writing and speaking.
- Use of teaching strategies that will encourage collaboration.
- Plan active "hands on" experiences to fully engage students in the learning process.
- Less lecturing and more student involvement.
- More problem-solving and critical thinking exercises.
- Student input-ownership.
- Cooperative learning practices have become much more widespread than previously, with many teachers using hands-on materials. Teachers no longer just lecture. Students teach themselves and others in many classes. Examples are: XCAT, many science and math classes, some social studies and English classes. Teachers have received and are receiving ongoing training in cooperative learning practices.
- Students serve as teachers and facilitators, especially during Socratic discussions.
- Use of cooperative learning groups and critical thinking skills.
- Teaming.
- Integrated instruction.
- Since developing the initial pilot program, this principle has been addressed by teachers in the essential school program. Small group, large group, discovery, research, and cooperative learning activities have been developed where teachers predominately act as facilitators of learning. Further, teams of teachers are investigating this principle as part of the District's staff development program. This principle is also being addressed by the District Learning Leadership Team.
- Teachers have incorporated discussion groups, cooperative learning, research projects and applied skills projects into classroom teaching procedures.
- XXXXX will continue to use cooperative learning and graphic organizers. Students will use telecommunication networks, reorganize cooperative work training and develop criteria for various exhibitions. A journalism class will publish a newspaper. Intra/inter school math competitions with awards as incentives will be developed.
- Use Socratic seminars to develop cooperative learning strategies, and the institution of an effective coaching program. Teachers, acting more as mentors of students than as dispensers of information. Expansion of computer labs as instructional tools to better develop students' skills.
- Weekly class seminars, monthly enrichment and quarterly All School Seminars. We have established computer coaching, an multimedia center and an AT&T Writers' Workbench.

Assessment Practices

- Exhibitions.
- Student portfolios.
- Every teacher is using portfolios in at least one class.

Other

- AJ Outreach Coordinators.
- Staff development activities have included cooperative learning techniques and methodology.
- Objective # A-1, "use portfolios, demonstration and other forms of authentic assessment."

Demonstration of Mastery

Definition:

Authentic/Alternative Assessment

- Performance based assessments.
- Students may be judged by a variety of means other than a written test. A certificate of promotion will be awarded to those students who show mastery of established criteria.
- The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final exhibition of learned skills and knowledge.
- First, students shall meet a minimum competence in language and mathematics. Students who do not meet minimum competency shall receive remediation through summer school and tutoring programs. Second, graduation from secondary school is based on an "exhibition" which demonstrates the student's ability to assimilate his/her secondary education.
- Demonstration of mastery means that when students have mastered concepts, they should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the concepts in a variety of ways.
- Students will exhibit that they have mastered a concept through various mediums.
- Students will be able to share with others what they have learned in a variety of ways.
- A student's ability to demonstrate his/her understanding of the basic skills and knowledge gained from a course should provide a basis for determining whether the student passes that course.
- Students should be required to demonstrate mastery of essential skills.
- The Alternative Assessment Design Team will establish criteria and procedures for portfolio and authentic performances in all subject areas and present sample portfolios to the entire staff.
- Each department will design a rubric and individual teachers will design portfolios to present to the class.
- Demonstration of competency in Reading, Writing, and Thinking by participating successfully in a ninety minute Socratic Seminar and writing an acceptable three to five page essay exploring the seminar text.
- The student will be able to exhibit the ability to perform certain tasks.
- As a middle school we are working on portfolios and group conferencing with students, teacher, and parents. Students explain work within their portfolios. This demonstrates their mastery of the units completed. Students run their own conference.
- Students will be able to show that they meet the criteria of the ideal XXXXX graduate.

Other

- Clearly defined goals and expectations of what students should know and be able to do in preparation for graduation.
- Since we are in our third year of implementation, we will not be at the demonstration of mastery level (for graduation purposes) until next year. However, this principle also directs us to provide intensive remedial work to assist students not yet at appropriate levels in language and mathematics to meet these standards.

Strategies/Plans:

Authentic/Alternative Assessment Practices

- Evidence of mastery will be provided by 1) Portfolios, 2) mini-level class based performance, 3) exhibitions.
- A standard for assessment will be developed.
- Portfolio assessments will address the XXXXX graduate.
- We have implemented the Structured Studies Program to bring students up to level. After they have obtained the necessary skills, they will be returned to the regular high school program here at

XXXXX. Many of our interdisciplinary programs which we have undertaken involve final products which are a demonstration of mastery. Additionally, we are implementing the use of portfolios this year.

- Students may be observed presenting authentic performances in their classes. Also, freshmen will present their end of the year exhibitions in May 1994.
- Exhibitions of mastery will be performed in areas as the subject material is presented. Student-made products will be used as an alternative means of assessment.
- Individual staff members and departments have undertaken projects involving exhibitions and portfolios. Two task forces are developing the guidelines for all-school portfolios and exhibitions.
- Many teachers require students to complete final exhibition of mastery projects as part of or in place of semester or final exams.
- Increase reliance upon the results of our assessment measures to strengthen the quality of instruction. Refine class demonstrations of Mastery, Math exhibition for Juniors, explore the assessment possibilities offered by Computer Technology.
- Students and teachers continue to work on product that demonstrates mastery - move away from all letter grades - some units will be demonstration and explanation at end of quarter.
- XXXXX will plan a varied program of authentic assessment tools to be used in all subject areas.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX teachers will continue to study various methods of conducting authentic assessments.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX teachers will develop various methods of conducting authentic assessments and collect them in a central repository.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX will plan a system of verifying the use, validity, and reliability of authentic assessment techniques in all subject areas.
- Currently, teachers are at different stages of investigating, developing, and implementing alternative forms of assessment. Performance-based forms of assessment are being implemented within and outside the essential school program. However, these types of assessment supplement rather than supplant more traditional forms of assessment. As the District moves toward meeting State quality review guidelines, multiple and diverse forms of assessment will be developed to supplement standardized assessment results.

Other

- Performances.
- During school year 1993-1994, XXXXX teachers will continue to study various methods of providing authentic learning activities.
- Remedial work to upgrade academic abilities.
- Practice the philosophy of student-as-worker.
- More emphasis by teachers on students projects.
- Create a photography class to handle the processing of portfolios and expand the video courses.

Building Tone

Definition:

Conducive to learning

- Building trust.
- The tone of the school should stress high expectations in a non-threatening manner. Students, teachers, and parents will collaborate to establish an appropriate set of values and standards.
- The tone of the school should be supportive; however, expectations shall be high. Ethical behavior should be stressed. Students should learn to be intrinsically motivated. Parental involvement shall be a high priority. Incentives for student performance will be determined by the faculty.

- The school atmosphere will be one of trust and decency. Non-threatening strategies are used in dealing with students.
- Building tone has to do with an atmosphere of respect and concern. Students know what is expected of them, but the building tone is one of unanxious expectation.
- An atmosphere of unanxious expectations, self-esteem activities and critical thinking skills will be promoted.
- The climate of the school should be one in which students feel welcome and secure while understanding the schools expectations and their responsibilities.
- To establish high expectations for students based on trust and to facilitate collaborative working relationships between teachers and between teachers and administrators to enable them to establish a building tone conducive to school improvement and enhanced student achievement. Parents should be involved in the process at appropriate points and levels.
- The tone of the building should be one of trust, decency, and fairness.
- The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress the values of unanxious expectation, trust and decency.
- Students and teachers work to create a school tone of mutual respect. All people in the school work to commit to positive values, trust, and decency. A continuous process that must be built into everyday life at XXXXX Middle School.

Other

- The school community, students, parents, and teachers can clearly anticipate the school's standard of decency and code of value.
- The ideal XXXXX graduate will have respect for self and others and will display caring by helping others.
- The School's Policy Design Team will be responsible for improving communication among students, parents and staff.
- Staff will have a feeling of ??? and friendliness.

Strategies/Plans:

Other

- Newsletter.
- Conflict Resolution Training.
- Holding students more responsible.
- Release time on Mondays.
- Open Houses.
- Healthy Lifestyles Teams Course.
- XXXXX will reassess the organizational and decision-making structures that support the intellectual purpose of the school.
- The intellectual purpose of XXXXX Junior High School is preparing productive students for the twenty-first century. Our graduates will have not only the critical thinking skills and study skills needed to question, investigate, conclude, and communicate effectively, they will also have the habit of using their skills in socially responsible ways. To fill this intellectual purpose, XXXXX must be a place where everyone -- student and adult -- actively uses his or her mind well every day.
- Remedial programs to assist students in improving their academic abilities.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children.
- Use of human development activities for trust building between teachers and students.
- Plan activities that enhance positive relations of students to one activity.
- Student behavior will be outlined in the student handbook.
- Parental input/steering committee membership.

- We have brought in community members to work with students to abate gang activity. These community representatives counsel troubled students. A series of workshops will be presented for teachers to address their concerns and help teachers provide a more trusting atmosphere.
- Several handouts related to decency in our school have been reviewed and discussed at various intervals by faculty and students. These activities are ongoing.
- Self-esteem workshops.
- Students are members of the Coalition of Essential Schools task forces. They are encouraged to provide service at school and also outside of the school as members of the Key Club.
- CAP (Cougar Advisory Program)
- Team and school recognition and incentives.
- GREAT program.
- Essential school program parent meetings are held twice during the year. Parent input is sought at these meetings. Through the work the Essential School Steering Committee, the Professional Services Committee, the District Learning Leadership Team, the Technology Task Force, and the Restructuring Task Force, teachers and administrators have been examining approaches to improving curriculum/instruction and student achievement. Expectations for achievement are communicated to students with appropriate assistance, from peer tutoring to pupil personnel support services, for students having difficulty meeting established expectations.
- The school's motto is excellence for everyone. Special education inclusion and the at-risk alternative school programs have been implemented and designed to help students having difficulties to succeed.
- Orientation/registration during three days in August. Publish and distribute student and teacher handbooks.
- Use the Martin Haberman Urban Teacher Interview Process,
- Institute the Martin Haberman Mentoring process for all new teachers.
- Recruit and train a pool of mentors for new staff.
- Develop and in-school suspension and Saturday detention program.
- Strategies: 1. Bring in speaker (s) to discuss the role of faculty in building tone. 2. Use in-school suspension students to discuss trust and decency issues with counselors and social workers.
- Weekend conferences
- Staff half-day conferences.
- The values, trust, and decency H.O.M.E. project that focuses on Humanity, Opportunity, Manners and Environment. Each quarter the school has a specific building block to focus on that helps maintain a positive school tone.

Teacher as Generalist/Specialist

Definition:

Multi- and cross-discipline teaching

- Teachers should be perceived as generalists of all learning, and the emphasis of teaching will be on multi-discipline and cross discipline instruction.
- All teachers in the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools are not limited to their subject area.
- We will help students in all subject areas.
- Teachers serve in multiple capacities with the school, teaching the students rather than the subject.
- The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (emphasizing and stressing the essential skills listed in principle #2) and specialists second. Staff should have a sense of commitment to the well-being of the students and the school.
- Teachers are not only specialists in their subject matter, but they must first and foremost be scholars of general education.

- Teacher as generalist first and specialist second means that the teacher is knowledgeable in more than one area (his/her specialty). The teacher has a core knowledge of all subject areas.
- One is a teacher first, then a teacher in their academic field.
- Teachers will provide instruction in two or more disciplines and relate those disciplines to others.
- Teachers and administrators have the opportunity to work collaboratively as subject matter specialists supporting one another to accomplish the articulated goals and objectives of the essential school program.
- Teachers should consider themselves as generalist rather than specialist. Teachers from all areas should work together to improve the school.
- Reading, writing and mathematics will be taught across the curriculum. Additionally, mathematics will be used as a problem-solving, communication and reasoning tool. Students will use computers, telecommunications and other technology.

Other

- Develop a professional library for the use of all staff.
- Staff Development Design Team will develop staff development activities.
- Teachers moving from subject area specialists to generalists.
- Teachers are committed to be whole teachers to the whole students. Therefore, teachers do much more than teach their specific discipline, they work to help develop the entire child.
- Teacher takes an interest in all areas, not just his or her subject area.
- The teacher's expertise extends beyond the traditional certificate boundaries.

Strategies/Plans:

Curriculum

- Writing skills across the curriculum.
- Writing across the curriculum--local assessment.
- Speaking across the curriculum.
- Listening skill--local assessment.
- Core curriculum and significant integrated instruction
- Class pairing of English/History

Instructional Practices

- Library supplements all areas.
- Integrated programs--Healthy Lifestyles, Science/English, History/English, PE/Health, Home Economics/Science.
- Our students will do projects which include research, analysis, and understand the principles involved with research.
- Interdisciplinary units.
- We have implemented many interdisciplinary lessons for students which focus on much more than an individual teacher's specialty. For example, in XCAT, each teacher involved must teach some Science, Math, History, Health, and English. Other projects reflect similar circumstances and experiences.
- Interdisciplinary units and integrated curriculum to bring together subject matter.
- The most challenging criteria for a comprehensive high school like XXXXX to implement is, "teachers working as generalists." Virtually all our staff teach in their major field of collegiate study. It is not often that teachers outside the English department grade student papers for the mechanics of a student's writing in addition to its content. Nor would an English teacher spend much time discussing the historical background of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Those responsibilities are the domain

and responsibility of other "specialists." The idea of departmentalization and the inherent bonding of those groups mitigates against the idea of teachers viewing themselves as generalists. However, recent efforts at curriculum integration have enabled teachers to complement and support one another in delivering curriculum.

- Several teachers team teach interdisciplinary units or courses. Special education teachers assist in classroom instruction in all subject areas as part of the inclusion program. Tech prep interdisciplinary course are in the planning stage.

Other

- Advisory Periods.
- Extensive staff development opportunities are available to teachers. Teachers are being encouraged to pursue additional coursework in related areas so as to improve their abilities.
- Only one guidance counselor--teachers help.
- Small schools allow for teachers to take care of all concerns for the students within the school. Teachers act as mentors, counselors, tutors, etc.
- Team teaching affords the opportunity for teacher to learn from one another. Most classes at XXXXX are team taught. Faculty members have been inserviced (ongoing) in the methodology.
- Team teachers are responsible for providing instruction in at least two disciplines.
- Familiarize parents, students, teachers, and community members with common learning experiences and techniques. Form an interdepartmental committee on common learning experiences. Work with the Department of Management Information Services of the XXXXX, to institute variable credits to help ensure mastery of common learning experience. Freshmen and Sophomore teachers and students will use journals to record their growth and development (teachers use journals instead of lesson plans)
- Sophomore team (Team of 5 teachers with the same students).
- All staff commitment to H.O.M.E. project which focuses on the overall development of children.

Reduced Student-to-Teacher Ratio

Definition:

Reducing Teacher-student ratio

- Total teacher load of approximately 1:80.
- Administrative and budget target should include total student loads per teacher of eighty or fewer pupils.
- Ideally student-to-teacher-ratio is 80:1. Realistically, the Board of Education ratio of student-to-teacher ratio is 130:1.
- Teachers should have no more than 80 pupil contacts per day and should have sufficient time for planning. Salaries should be competitive with other districts and the professions. A concerted effort will be made to retain all possible course offerings, even if additional costs are incurred.
- The school will work to achieve the student-to-teacher ratio of 80 to 1.
- We presently have a student-to-teacher ration of less than 80-to-1.

Other

- A goal for teachers will be to have responsibility for fewer students and to have substantial time for collective planning.
- Since the XXXXX has changed from a nine to a seven period day, this has affected our class sizes. Our classes are now larger than before, and there seems to be no way to reduce class size due to current budget constraints. Ideally, we would like classes of twenty in order to better serve our

students. Our common prep time was also stolen from us during this budget crunch which makes it very hard to do our interdisciplinary planning.

- We, as a result of Board of Education constraints, have not been able to implement this principle.
- Through block scheduling and teaming this level exists for our 6th and 7th grades. Because the 8th grade is a transition year to the high school, a more traditional schedule exists for students. Teachers continue to have a common planning time and team meetings. Student and parent conferences are done as a team.
- Additional funding and staff develop support will be provided.
- Provide a student-teacher ratio conducive to program development, implementation, and personalization.
- School budgets should allow for small class size and common planning time.
- Convert the 80 minute program to a 100 minute program.
- Have teachers have class loads which will allow for teachers to know their students well.

Strategies/Plans:

- We continue to write and submit proposals to increase the amount of funds available for our programs. Lane placement courses are offered on site and at nearby institutions.
- By creating teams we have been successful in reducing the student-teacher ratio from about 150 to 1 to about 115 to 1. One team has been able to create a ratio of 58 to 1.
- Efforts have been made to maintain a student-teacher ratio that facilitates the development of an effective essential school program. However, the idea of an 80:1 student teacher ratio would be difficult to realize in our district, because it is partly founded on the idea of reducing or eliminating the services provided by counselors or opportunities to participate in extracurricular programs.
- One hundred-minute-double period classes allow each teacher's load to be reduced by half (from 150 to 80 students)
- Create innovative linking of courses and scheduling to have teachers' load reduced.
- Very difficult with budget cuts and increasing enrollment. We know that 80 or fewer pupils is not going to be possible in the near future. Therefore, we have focused on all school activities so that more teachers are in touch with kids and aware of their needs as middle schoolers and students.